Honors 416, **Sex, Self and Society**
Fall 2014
Office Hours: M, W 2-4pm

Dr. Bernard McGrane
Office: Roosevelt 216
McGrane@Chapman.edu

Honors 416 Sex, Self and Society

> "We are all motivated by an intense curiosity about sex but thwarted by our inability to discuss it." (Winks and Semans 1997:36)
>
> "What you have between your legs is sex (male or female). Gender (masculine or feminine) is between your ears; it is the whole of your life, your emotional and mental makeup, the way you present yourself in society, the way you interact with others, your imagination, the theater of your being." Caitriona Reed, *Coming Out Whole*
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> "Sex is just as taboo as it was 100 years ago." (Spenser Boring, Student)
>
> "Everything in the world is about sex, except sex. Sex is about power." Oscar Wilde

Required Texts: (All are 'inexpensive' paperbacks. Many used copies on internet, as PDF's at http://bookos.org/, on Lib Reserve and our Blackboard.)

1.Veronique Mottier. **Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction**
2. Winks, Cathy and Anne Semans. **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex**.(3rd Ed)(Not on Blackboard)
2a. John and Julie Gottman. **Gott Sex?** (on Blackboard)
3. Arnaud, Margot. **The Art of Sexual Ecstasy**. (short selections; on Blackboard)
4. Friday, Nancy. **My Secret Garden, An Anthology of Women's Sexual Fantasies**. (selections) (Not on Bb)
_____. **Women on Top**. (selections) (Not on Bb)
_____. **Men in Love**. (selections) (Not on Bb)
5. Kahr, Brett. **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies** (selections) (Not on Bb)
6. Carnes, Patrick. **Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction** (Not on Bb**)**
7. Ann Rice. **The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty** (Not on Bb)
8. Harville Hendricks – **Getting the Love You Want (**highly recommended)
9. Charlotte Davis Kasl – **If The Buddha Dated** (Not on Bb)
10. Thich Nhat Hanh – **True Love** (full text on blackboard)
11. Planned Parenthood Website: *BetterThanSexED.org* (highly recommended)

Required Materials on Blackboard and Library Reserve:

All "Sample Quality Papers" from your class that I notify you about.
Inge Bell – **This Book is Not Required, An Emotional Survival Manual for Students:**
Chapters: Grades, Support Your Local Teacher, An Academic Question, Questions of Academic Integrity

Louis Gould, "X: A Fabulous Child's Story"
Bernard McGrane – **The Un-TV and the 10 MPH Car:** selections
"*Kinsey*" chapter from Paul Robinson's- **The Modernization of Sex**
Dennis Waskul, et al. "Women and Their Clitoris"
M. Scott Peck – **The Road Less Traveled** (ch, "Love")
John Gottman, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work:** selections
Christopher Aanstoos "Phenomenology of Sexuality"
D.H. Lawrence, "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover"
Denis de Rougement, "Love"
Snell and Gail Putney, "Love or Marriage"
Justin Sterling – **What Really Works With Men** : selections
Michel Foucault **The History of Sexuality:** selections
Sontag, Susan "The Pornographic Imagination**"**
Camille Paglia, **Sexual Personae, Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson:** selections

Possible films we may use:

Kinsey; Don Jon; Bliss (Hollywood film); In the Realm of the Senses (Japanese film); What Kids Want to Know About Sex and Growing Up; The Education of Shelby Knox: Sex, Lies and Education; Women Sex; Passion and Power: The Technology of Orgasm; Still Doing It: The Intimate Lives of Women over 65; Adult Entertainment: A Psychosocial Study of An American Obsession; The Vagina Monologues; The Clitoris; The Secrets of a Sexual Surrogate; Nina Hartley's Guides; Sam Keen on Sex and the Sacred; Secrets of Sacred Sex; Killing Us Softly; Tough Guise; Dreamworlds; Wrestling With Manhood; The Pinks and the Blues; The Perfect Vagina; Porndemic; Sexy Baby; Understanding Hookup Culture.

Recommended Books:

Ryan, Chistopher and Cacilda, Jetha, Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern Relationships
Easton and Liszt, The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities
Winks and Semans, The Woman's Guide to Sex on the Web
Diamond, Jared. Why is Sex Fun?
Eric Fromm – The Art of Loving
Dennis de Rougemont – Love in the Western World
Nathaniel Brandon – The Psychology of Romantic Love
Morton Hunt – The Natural History of Love

Course Statement:

> "Throughout history men have been the subject of sex while women have been the object of sex."
> (S. Mech, student)

> Alfred Kinsey cracked open the field of sexological research, and Nancy Friday initiated a public discourse around sexual fantasy in particular….Most of us regard ourselves as the supreme architects of our sexual lives, choosing our partners, our fantasies, and our pornography. But the data I have collected suggest that we may have less conscious control over our fantasies and sexual predilections than we would wish to believe. (Brett Kahr, **Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head?** p 395)

> If you believe in nothing else believe that sexual repression never sleeps, especially the sexual repression of women. (Nancy Friday, **Women on Top**, p 17)

This course explores the social construction of sexual ignorance and the social accomplishment of sexual repression. It addresses our sexual socialization. Simultaneously we will attempt to promote greater realism, greater skillfulness and greater literacy regarding our lives as sexual beings, as gendered beings and as romantic beings. We will inquire into the barriers to sexual communication and also promote cross-gender understanding and appreciation. We will explore the distinction between conditioned, habitual sexuality and conscious sexuality. We will examine the achievement of intimacy, the labor of romance and relationship, and the spiritual aspects of eroticism.

Sociologically we will address how conventional sex education reinforces sexual ignorance and how, even in this most private and intimate of spheres, the fingers of society are relentlessly present. Is it possible to reduce or eliminate the socially acquired sexual suspicion and mistrust between men and women in contemporary society? Can contemporary western males connect with their "inner female"? Can females connect with their "inner male"? For our culture and for our history, a woman is an object of desires—not a subject with desires. What is the relation between sexuality and power over others? What is "sacred sexuality" and what is the relation between sexuality as pleasure, sexuality as power and sexuality as spiritual practice?

Education is a journey, not a destination, hence students will be highly encouraged to integrate their formal readings with their own personal life experiences and to practice <u>doing</u> sociology rather than merely learning about it. We will also be doing various "experiments" in "de-socialization" wherein we will use ourselves as a laboratory and we will, to some degree, become our own sociological experiments. Our whole overly medieval, academic, educational tradition is that you acquire knowledge through collecting stuff from text books and "knowing" it (especially for "tests"). We will attempt to contest the authority of that tradition and celebrate first hand investigation, thinking, and creating rather than collecting and memorizing.

> There are those who make a case that the conflict, competition, and exploitation that erode our planet will not change until we, as humans, move into more collaborative and cooperative modes. Such a change in ecology starts with the most fundamental aspect of our relationships: our sexuality. We cannot evolve further until men and women treat each other differently. Respect for sexual preference, the protection of children from inappropriate and abusive behavior, the reduction of sexual shame, and the celebration of sexual joy will emerge naturally with a shift to nonpatriarchal, noncompetetitieve, and nonexploitive values about sex.(Patrick Carnes, ***Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction*** *pg xvi)*

Major Study Units:

1. The theory of repression and the relationship of sexuality and society
2. Sex education itself as a medium reinforcing ignorance and suppression
3. Male Sexual Body, Sexual Mind
4. Female Sexual Body, Sexual Mind
5. Interviews on American's sexual fantasy life
6. Sexuality and Spirituality
7. Sexualities: Fear, Ignorance, and Repression
8. Sex is not natural; Heterosexuality is not innate; Society is inside of sex
9. Communication across the Sex Divide
10. Sociological Conceptions of Gender
11. The "R" word: Relationship, Love and Marriage

Generic Syllabus Page: Our Program Learning Outcomes are the following:

1. Students will learn to explain and discuss social history, theory, and terminology regarding human sexuality.

2. Students will learn to explain and discuss how sociological and psychological research and analysis regarding human sexuality are carried out.

3. Students will learn to explain and discuss the broad range of social institutions and process regarding human sexuality. This will be viewed in a micro-sociological manner as well as in the context of world societies—that is a macro-sociological manner. Students will become aware of global issues and problems regarding human sexuality.

4. Students will demonstrate an ability to write effectively using appropriate sociological, psychological and philosophical style and terminology.

Our Course learning outcomes are the following:
Students who complete this course should be able to:
1. Describe the key methodological paradigms of the social and psychological sciences studying human sexuality.
2. Design, conduct, and evaluate research employing a variety of different methodologies.
3. Evaluate competing "knowledge claims" regarding the foundations and interpretations of human sexuality.

The Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy, Chapman University's students with Disabilities Policy, and Equity and Diversity policy has been modified. The following is the revised text:

Chapman University's Academic Integrity Policy:
Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy:
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Disability Services Office, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Equity and Diversity
Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlines in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy: http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

An Optimistic Calendar and Detailed Road Map

You are absolutely responsible for EVERYTHING that occurs in class WHETHER YOU ARE PRESENT OR NOT--(please connect with 2 classmates to contact for help if you miss a class.) Many assignments only given orally in class. This syllabus is a guide for an educational journey, not a legal document. Please relate to it accordingly. Unless you are on some form of medical alert ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES—cell phones, laptops, etc--are to be TURNED OFF during class.

Class Integrity: This course will breakdown and become completely impossible without each student's commitment to fully honor and respect the confidentiality of what gets shared here.

SEX EDUCATION AND MIS-EDUCATION: SEXUALITY, GENDER AND SOCIETY: EROTIC ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

"In America sex is an obsession. In other parts of the world it is a fact." (Marlene Dietrich, Hollywood Actress)

WEEK 1. Sept 2- ***Required***: *First: Read over this entire syllabus--carefully.* **Bell – This Book is Not Required, An Emotional Survival Manual for Students:** Chapters: Grades, Support Your Local Teacher, An Academic Question, Questions of Academic Integrity.(Blackboard)

Mottier – **Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction** (entre) Optional: Alexander, "Gender" and "Sexuality" chapters (on Blackboard)

Wink's **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex** (Foreword, chs. 1-5) Gottman's **Gott Sex? –** Myths about Sex (pgs 73-91)

(For all of McGrane readings/exploriments, given in **The Un-TV and the 10 MPH Car,** the instructions are to **first** do the exploriment **then afterwards** do the readings on it in the book/Blackboard.)

"Sexuality is not a leisure or part-time activity. It is a way of being." (Alexander Lowen, **Love and Orgasm**)

WEEK 2. Sept 9- ***Required***: Wink's **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex** (Ch 6 through 10) and the corresponding Team Presentations;

Kinsey chapter from Robertson's **The Modernization of Sex** (on Blackboard) and the corresponding Team Presentations; Gould's "X-A Fabulous Child's Story"; Waskul, et al "Women and Their Clitoris" (both on Blackboard).

WEEK 3. Sept 16- ***Required***: Wink's **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex** (Ch 11 through 20) Anand, Margot: **The Art of Sexual Ecstasy**. (Pages 1-63. On blackboard) and the corresponding Team Presentations

SEXUAL FANTASIES, THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

…can we dismiss our fantasies as just harmless private entertainment—assuming that a bit of kink never hurt anyone—or do our fantasies actually govern our lives in other respects? (Brett Kahr, **Who's Been Sleeping in Your Head?** p 270)

So long as women were cut off from masturbation, they were cut off from their inner erotic lives. (Nancy Friday, **Women on Top**, p 29)

WEEK 4. Sept 23- ***Required***: Wink's **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex** (as above) **;** Friday's **My Secret Garden (***We all collectively read*: Introduction; Ch 1 "Tell me what you are thinking about,"; Ch 2, "Why fantasize when you have me;" Then *you individually self-select 3 rooms* from Ch 3 "House of fantasy;" and, finally, *We all collectively read*: Ch 6 "Fantasy Accepted"). **Women on Top** (*We all read*: Part One, "Report from the Erotic Interior;" Part Two, "Separating Sex and Love: In Praise of Masturbation" *You self-select three sections* on fantasy types in Part Three: "The Fantasies." **Men in Love** (*We all read*: Ch's 1, "The Masculine Conflict", Ch 2, "Masturbation" and Ch 3,"Sharing and Living out Fantasies" and then *you self-select 3 chapters* from the rest.) Team Presentations

Week 5. Sept 30- **Exam #1, Sept 30**

Required: Friday's **My Secret Garden (continue** selections); **Women on Top** (continue selections); **Men in Love** (continue selections) Team Presentations

Being able to give ourselves an orgasm is sexual independence; though it's nice to have a partner, it's important to know that for sex to take place it isn't necessary. Giving ourselves an orgasm is the sexual equivalent of being able to pay our own rent. (Nancy Friday, **Women On Top** pg. 55) In all of human life no one has more power over another

person than a mother over a child…. Mother, let your little girl masturbate. (Nancy Friday, **Women On Top** pg. 59)

I can conclude that approximately 90% of masturbatory fantasies contain elements of obviously traumatic incidents which became eroticized…that trauma functions as a key ingredient in the genesis of adult sexual fantasies. (Kahr, **Who's Been Sleeping in Your Head?** pg 393)

Incest is boot camp for prostitution. (Andrea Dworkin)

Week 6. **Oct 7-** ***Required***: Friday's **My Secret Garden (** continue selections); **Women on Top** (continue selections); **Men in Love** (continue selections) Team Presentations

Week 7. **Oct 14-** ***Required***: Kahr's **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies** (xi-108; 269-451) and Carnes' **Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction** (entire) Ann Rice. **The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty** (entire)**.**
[FYI, With regards to Rice's Fantasy novel, a former student recommended the works of Christie Sims: http://www.amazon.com/Christie-Sims/e/B00CMBW1PC/ref=pd_sim_kstore_bl_2]

BLACKBOARD READINGS**:** Susan Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination"; Camille Paglia, **Sexual Personae**; (selections); Aanstoos "Phenomenology of Sexuality;" Michel Foucault **The History of Sexuality** (selections)

The absence of a relationship and the desire for heightened excitement are the twin pillars of the sexual addiction. (Carnes, **Out of the Shadows** pg 43)

Intimacy is not intercourse. (former student)

WEEK 8. **Oct 21-** ***Required***: Kahr's **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies** (xi-108; 269-451) and Carnes' **Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction** (entire) Ann Rice. **The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty** (entire)

BLACKBOARD READINGS**:** Susan Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination"; Camille Paglia, **Sexual Personae**; (selections); Aanstoos "Phenomenology of Sexuality;" Michel Foucault **The History of Sexuality** (selections)

WEEK 9. Oct 28- ***Required*****: :** Kahr's **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies** (xi-108; 269-451) and Carnes' **Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction** Ann Rice. **The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty**

WEEK 10. Nov 4- ***Required*****: :** Kahr's **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies** (xi-108; 269-451) and Carnes' **Out of the Shadows, Understanding Sexual Addiction** Ann Rice. **The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty**

WEEK 11. Nov 11. ***Exam #2 Nov 11***.

ROMANCE, LOVE, RELATIONSHIP, MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY

"I did not yet love and I wanted to love so I sought what I might love, in love with loving."
St. Augustine, Confessions

"The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them."
Thomas Merton

"Friendship is the only real model for true romantic love."
Inge Bell, This Book Is Not Required

"American Marriages are unstable because Americans marry for love."
Putney, The Adjusted American

Required: Inge Bell- **This Book is Not Required** - "Love" chapter; M. Scott Peck – **The Road Less Traveled** (selections) Charlotte Davis Kasl – **If The Buddha Dated.** Thich Nhat Hanh – **True Love** (on Blackboard) Highly recommended: Harville Hendricks – **Getting the Love You Want**

BLACKBOARD MATERIALS: John Gottman, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** (selections**),** D.H. Lawrence, "A Propos of Lady Chatterly's Lover", Denis de Rougement, "Love", Snell and Gail Putney,

"Love or Marriage" Justin Sterling – **What Really Works With Men** (selections)

"I am in love with my best guy friend and he has no idea." (Former student)

"Falling in love is easy—staying in love is a whole other story." (Noah Mayer, student)

WEEK 12. Nov 18- ***Required***: Inge Bell "Love"; M. Scott Peck – **The Road Less Traveled** (selections) Charlotte Davis Kasl – **If The Buddha Dated,** Thich Nhat Hanh – **True Love** (on Blackboard)

BLACKBOARD MATERIALS: John Gottman, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** (selections**),** D.H. Lawrence, "A Propos of Lady Chatterly's Lover", Denis de Rougement, "Love", Snell and Gail Putney, "Love or Marriage" Justin Sterling – **What Really Works With Men** (selections)

"It seems to me that working for love is an expression of love."
Joe Wheeler (student)

"I need to learn to be alone because if I can't be alone, then why would anyone want to be close with me. Much of learning how to be in a successful love relationship has to do with having a successful relationship with yourself."

Matthew Skufza (student)

******THANKSGIVING BREAK*********

WEEK 13. Dec 2- ***Required***: M. Scott Peck – **The Road Less Traveled** (selections) Charlotte Davis Kasl – **If The Buddha Dated,** Thich Nhat Hanh – **True Love** (on Blackboard)

BLACKBOARD MATERIALS: John Gottman, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** (selections**),** D.H. Lawrence, "A Propos of Lady Chatterly's Lover", Denis de Rougement, "Love", Snell and Gail Putney, "Love or Marriage" Justin Sterling – **What Really Works With Men** (selections)

"As much as we may want and need healthy intimate relationships, many of us have never learned the skills necessary to develop them. Most of us received more training in how to drive a car than in how to select a partner and build a healthy relationship."

Terry Gorski, Getting Love Right

"The more I learn about love, the less I know."
Sarah Mallon (student)

"Grant that I may seek to love rather than be loved. To understand rather than be understood. To comfort rather than be comforted."

St Francis of Assisi

SPIRITUALITY, SEX, RELATIONSHIP AND SOCIETY

WEEK 14. Dec 9- ***Required*** : Charlotte Davis Kasl – **If The Buddha Dated,** Thich Nhat Hanh – **True Love** (on Blackboard)

Observations on Marriage:

Love: a temporary insanity, curable by marriage. -Ambrose Bierce, author and editor (1842-1914)

"In 25 years of marriage I'm proud to say the word 'divorce' has never come up once…..'Murder'

Yes, but 'divorce', no." (Interview with a married couple)

You know what getting married is? It's agreeing to taking this person who right now is at the top of his form, full of hopes and ideas, feeling good, looking good, wildly interested in you because you're the same way, and sticking by him while he slowly disintegrates. And he does the same for you. You're his responsibility now and he's yours. If no one else will take care of him, you will. If everyone else rejects you, he won't. What do you think love is? Going to bed all the time? -Jane Smiley, novelist (b.1949)

FINAL TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE on Scheduled Final. (More information TBA)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exam Exercises (For turned in class paper Do NOT put your name on the front of your essay as usual but rather *on the back* of the last page. 2 copies are required—*paper copy* submitted in class plus *electronic copy* submitted to Blackboard's Assignment, Turn-it-in.com. You can put your name on front for the electronic copy. Without these two copies no credit will be given. Details and full explanations of all exams, quizzes and presentations will be provided.)

1. Exam #1: (25% of total grade)

   a) Take Home Essay: Integrate the materials of weeks 1 through 4 around a central theme.(Mottier, Semans, Anand, Kinsey, the films, other readings and discussions) (2 to 4 typed pages).
   b) Possible in class essay and possible multiple choice exam.

2. Exam #2: (25% of total grade)

a) Take Home Essay: Integrate the materials of weeks 4 through 8 around core theme. (Mostly Friday and Kahr--also Carnes, Rice, Sontag, the films and discussions) (2 to 4 typed pages).
b) Possible in class essay and possible multiple choice exam.

3. Team Projects, Exploriments, and Presentations (25% of total grade)

4. Exam #3 (25% of total grade)

Final Take Home Exam: Integrate the materials of the last few weeks around a central theme (Bell, Peck, Gottman, Putney, Kasl, Thich Nhat Hahn, the films, etc. 3 to 5 typed pages)

5. To work on and improve your reading and writing skills, I recommend you use Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg and How to Read a Book by Mortimer Adler.

6. Categories of evaluating take-home integration essays: a) power of integrating theme, continuity and comprehensiveness; b) use of materials, range and depth of reference; c) creativity, boldness, and originality; d) writing style, communication skillfulness.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Team Projects/Experiments	25%
Final	25%

Course Integrity and Discipline

1. Anyone who disrupts the **integrity** of the class environment – for example through chattering or consistently coming late – will be dropped from the course.
2. Anyone who engages **in plagiarism** – presenting someone else's written work as your own – will be dropped/failed from the course. A letter will go in your university file and it is possible you will be expelled from the university.

Random Addenda:

I. Sexual Pleasure versus Bliss

The following is a quote from Margot Anand in The Art of Sexual Ecstasy (p. 2-3):

> My first peak sexual experience took place in Paris, France, my hometown, when I was 18 and set me off on a course of study and teaching that I have pursued ever since. At the time I was very much in love with a young American artist named Robert. He certainly fit the all-American male image: Tall, strong, good looking, and more than capable of sweeping me off my feet. Sex between us was raw, primal, and wild, fulfilling my adolescent dreams of how a "real man" should behave with his woman. I was studying yoga at the time, however, and was beginning to experience some subtle dimensions of feeling – quiet, meditative, serene moods – and I began to wonder what it would be like to integrate these states into my sex life.
>
> I spoke about my feelings one evening during our lovemaking. We were having sex in the usual energetic way, when I said, "Robert, please slow down; let's try something new." We stopped and simply relaxed staying bonded together with Robert still inside me. I was lying on top. I felt excited because I had initiated something new, removing his responsibility for making something happen. There was a subtle switch of roles, and I felt him shift into a more feminine, receptive attitude. We remained like that for many minutes, relaxed while at the same time feeling the excitement of sexual arousal in our bodies. I soon felt a kind of warm, glowing energy beginning to diffuse itself through my whole pelvic area.
>
> We wanted to maintain sexual arousal, so when the excitement began to fade, we returned to our usual style of active lovemaking. Then, just before the peak of orgasmic release, we stopped, relaxed, and became still once more. We repeated this pattern several times, and then something totally unexpected happened. Suddenly we both seemed to be floating in an unbounded space filled with warmth and light. The boundaries between our bodies dissolved and, along with them, the distinctions between man and woman. We were one. The experience became timeless, and we seemed to remain like this forever. There was no need to have an orgasm. There was no need even to "make love." There was nothing to do, nothing to achieve. We were in ecstasy.
>
> After that extraordinary experience I tried many times to recapture the ecstasy in our lovemaking but without success. Robert quickly forgot about it, but I began to feel that ordinary genital orgasm was not the only desirable state to which lovemaking could lead. Like many others, I felt the frustration of loving at 10 percent of my potential. I recognized that the pleasure of routine or

> recreational sex was not the ultimate pleasure; indeed it was just a beginning. How would it be, I wondered, if during lovemaking one could consistently re-create the conditions that led to bliss? I decided to search for ways to cultivate ecstatic states in conjunction with the sexual experience.
> For the next 15 years, I explored the great traditions of ecstatic sexuality.

The following is a quote from a ’06 student essay

If it’s still unclear on what I’m saying then I’ll try to use an analogy using a video game. (I know what you’re saying: “A video game? How the hell are these two things even close?” Just hear me out.) Video games are the most fun the first time you play them. Each level is new with something unknown around every corner. The further you get the more difficult it gets, yet it’s easier to maintain a more difficult stage because you have since become accustomed to the character and the controls. Finally you beat it and now the game has little or no interest to you because you’ve already explored everything there is to explore. *Getting love right is a never ending video game*. Endless amounts of levels with all kinds of ways of beating them. You may think you have conquered the love game because you are bored with your relationship and feel that there is nothing left to explore. This merely means that you have beaten that level and its time to move onto the next. This doesn’t necessarily mean that each new level represents a new relationship, but actually levels vary greatly for each individual and can deal with the same significant other for a million levels or last for only one. This concept or idea is so far what I believe I’ve best learned from this course.

Jim, former student